

From the Mentors, Fall 2004:

### A List of "Best Practices" and Points to Remember as You Begin Tutoring

- ✓ Don't dive for the paper. Talk with your client first in order to discover the "context" for writing. Find out what the writer understands. What is the assignment? What are the student's goals?
- ✓ Ask questions. Shut up and listen. Get comfortable with "wait-time."
- ✓ Be patient; go slow. STOP if you think you're not working productively; renegotiate what work to do next.
- ✓ Remember that you are NOT a proofreader and editor; the Writing Center is not a laundry service to cleanse dirty papers of errors. You are a beginning teacher of writing. Teaching includes showing students strategies for doing their own writing work independently.
- ✓ Remember that you are a student too. Try to see tutoring situations and writing problems from the point of view of your client. *Wonder* and ask about her goals and concerns.
- ✓ Talk to peers, Mentors, Martha, Mark. Share your tutoring experiences. Problem-solve alongside others in order to improve your tutoring practices.
- ✓ When you find a "method" or a "routine" you're comfortable with, be uneasy. Challenge yourself to look for "expert blind spots."
- ✓ Always ask not just *what* to do in a tutoring situation, but, more importantly, "WHY?"
- ✓ Be resourceful: Seek out help from classmates, Mentors, handbooks, the Writing Center Web site, style books, etc.
- ✓ Address "global" issues (content, organization) first, then work your way down to "local" (sentence-level issues of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics).
- ✓ Work with the writer to make a PLAN for AFTER the session: What will he do when he leaves the Writing Center? What will be his priorities for revision?
- ✓ Avoid being railroaded into work that is inappropriate or unproductive. Focus on teaching, not telling, or fixing. Set limits, be explicit about them, and stick to them.
- ✓ Recognize tensions, look for WHY, and reflect on how you might work differently NOW, and in your next session.
- ✓ Have fun.